Uprisings in an Age of Uncertainty: A Look at the Potential for US Sponsored Social Movements to Achieve Reform

A Monograph

by

MAJ Jason Martinez
United States Army

School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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Trends in American warfare indicate a gap between military operations in active war and military activities outside of war. Recent research identifies a space of state to state interaction that lies between diplomacy and war known as the gray zone. As state and non-state actors continue to resort to activities that threaten the interests of the United States but remain below the threshold of US commitment to military intervention, other options become necessary. Unconventional warfare, an option to disrupt, coerce, or replace an existing regime, is an activity executed historically in this gray zone. Due to its very nature, it lies in the spectrum nearer to war. But what options are available that lie nearer to diplomacy? This monograph seeks to show that there can also be an option which leans closer to peace, a gray zone activity which provides space for policy and diplomacy. It argues that by exploiting vulnerabilities that exist within a target state, the United States can leverage a specific group or groups within that state to rise against a targeted policy or individual and enact moderate change through social movement for the sake of United States interests. This monograph generates a hypothesis of a specific type of activity called targeted collective action, which can capitalize on vulnerabilities during peace time with the purpose of enacting a social movement aimed at reform-oriented change for the sake of US interests through persuading and/or co-opting existing organizations. The Arab Spring provides countries impacted by social movements with variable outcomes. This phenomenon allows substantial case studies for analysis to test the facets of targeted collective action.

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Approved by:

_____, Monograph Director
Patricia J. Blocksome, MA

_____, Seminar Leader
Kevin P. Romano, COL

_____, Director, School of Advanced Military Studies
Henry A. Arnold III, COL

Accepted this 10th day of May 2016 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, PhD

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Abstract

Social Movements in an Age of Uncertainty: A Look at the Potential for US Sponsored Uprisings to Achieve Reform, by Major Jason Martinez, 46 pages

Trends in American warfare indicate a gap between military operations in active war and military activities outside of war. Recent research identifies a space of state to state interaction that lies between diplomacy and war known as the gray zone. As state and non-state actors continue to resort to activities that threaten the interests of the United States but remain below the threshold of US commitment to military intervention, other options become necessary. Unconventional warfare, an option to disrupt, coerce, or replace an existing regime, is an activity executed historically in this gray zone. Due to its very nature, it lies in the spectrum nearer to war. But what options are available that lie nearer to diplomacy? This monograph seeks to show that there can also be an option which leans closer to peace, a gray zone activity which provides space for policy and diplomacy. It argues that by exploiting vulnerabilities that exist within a target state, the United States can leverage a specific group or groups within that state to rise against a targeted policy or individual and enact moderate change through social movement for the sake of United States interests. This monograph generates a hypothesis of a specific type of activity called targeted collective action, which can capitalize on vulnerabilities during peace time with the purpose of enacting a social movement aimed at reform-oriented change for the sake of US interests through persuading and/or co-opting existing organizations. The Arab Spring provides countries impacted by social movements with variable outcomes. This phenomenon allows substantial case studies for analysis to test the facets of targeted collective action.

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Acknowledgments

Acronyms

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
JP	Joint Publication
MCIS	Moscow Conference on International Security
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PJD	Islamist Justice and Development Party
SF	US Army Special Forces
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TC	Training Circular
TCA	Targeted Collective Action
UAE	United Arab Emirates
US	United States
USG	United States Government
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
UW	Unconventional Warfare

Introduction

Uprisings and social movements shaped world history and formed some of today's geopolitical boundaries. These phenomena caused the birth of new nations and the collapse of others. Great empires and nations have risen to prominence only to fall victim to internal strife. The causes of internal conflict are as varied as are the results of the movements that sparked them.

An uprising can be defined as "an act or instance of rising up; a usually localized act of popular violence in defiance usually of an established government."[1] In other words, uprisings are a form of resistance against the government or occupying power. Uprisings manifest themselves in various forms such as revolts, rebellions, protests, and insurrections.[2] These actions can result in spontaneous upheaval leading to revolution and civil war. To resist the authoritative entity, the desire to change or remove intolerable conditions imposed by a regime must be profound within the individual.[3] This desire to resist for the sake of change can build and infuse itself from the individual into the community he or she belongs too.[4] The revulsion of intolerable conditions can spread to surrounding linked communities. It can grow into hatred that initially displays itself as "sporadic, spontaneous nonviolent and violent acts of resistance by the people toward authority."[5]

The will of the people to continue this movement contributes to the effectiveness and ultimate success of an uprising. However, external actors can influence uprisings. The purpose of this research is to identify conditions required for 'successful' uprisings and social movements in order to determine how

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[1] "Uprising," Merriam-Webster.com, accessed 26 Aug 2015, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/uprising.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Training Circular (TC) 18-01, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 2-1.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

the United States Government (USG), as an external actor, can set conditions and influence a motivated population to rise up in support of political goals. Given this purpose, the research question this monograph seeks to answer is: What is the potential for the USG to exercise options outside of a formal state of war, such as social movements, to achieve limited objectives in countries with belligerent regimes?

Global threats arising from nations adversarial to the USG continue to persist. Historical trends in American warfare indicate a gap between the need for military operations during active war, and the need for action during times outside of war.[6] The recent United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) white paper, "The Gray Zone," identifies a space (gray zone) between war and peace where state and non-state actor aggressive interaction does not fit into normal peace-time interaction or full scale war. This interaction creates challenges that are "characterized by ambiguity [of] the nature of the conflict, opacity of the parties involved, or uncertainty about the relevant policy and legal frameworks."[7] In the past, gray zone challenges arose from states or groups affiliated with belligerent states that remained below the threshold of USG triggers to commit to full-scale military intervention. This Gray Zone paper raises the question: how do we contend with threats emerging from an already complex environment outside of the legal confines of a formal state of war?

Unconventional warfare (UW) to replace existing antagonistic regimes is one option. However, this may not be a viable option due to lack of United States (US) domestic and/or international support. Risks may exist to US policy and US interests by intervening in such an overt or confrontational manner. Additionally, complete replacement or disruption of the belligerent regime, the goals of UW, may not be necessary to meet US interests. Sometimes, the attainment of limited objectives by way of reform may be all that is required to reassert US interests in the region. One option proposed in recent research to achieve limited objectives is a social, or popular uprising, such as occurred in the Middle East and North Africa

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[6] Phillip Kapusta, "The Gray Zone," *Special Warfare* 28, no. 4 (October-December 2015): 20-21.

[7] Ibid., 20.

with the Arab Spring.[8] However, there is currently a lack of research that identifies indicators, determines feasibility, and outlines a process of conducting actions that provoke an uprising in targeted countries for the sake of minor to moderate reform. In order to fill this research gap, this monograph will explore conditions within the state, and assess vulnerabilities to exploit, as it examines how USG support to social movements can serve as a feasible alternative to UW or full-scale military intervention. It will focus on options for using social movements against a hostile nation state to achieve USG political goals.

This monograph seeks to show that by exploiting vulnerabilities that may already exist within a target state, the United States can leverage specific groups within that state to rise against a targeted policy or individual and enact moderate change for the sake of US interests. It will support this claim by analyzing theories of uprisings and social movements as well as existing literature and doctrine of UW. This monograph generates a hypothesis of a specific type of activity called targeted collective action (TCA), and assesses the feasibility of sponsoring a social movement for the sake of achieving minor to moderate reform within a state in support of US interests. The countries of the Arab Spring, as a case study, offer variable outcomes of states that underwent the same type of social movement, which permits the identification of parameters in the gray zone for fomenting TCA as a successful option to exercise.

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[8] Jason Martinez, "From Foreign Internal Defense to Unconventional Warfare: Campaign Transitions when US-support to Friendly Governments Fails" (master's thesis, Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 2015), 164.

Literature Review

Detailed research in identifying and exploiting vulnerabilities to incite an uprising for the sake of minor to moderate reform is limited. However, this literature review will explore research on the history and theory of uprisings and social movements. The section will begin with a deconstruction of uprisings, with a focus on conditions imposed by the regime that fracture society and cause grievances among the population. The review will study the diffusion of grievances created by existing conditions into the larger populace, methods of expression, and goals of the movement. Recent research has linked the leverage of social movements as supplemental to UW campaigns and support of insurgencies. This review will touch briefly on UW and recent research linking it to social movements and uprisings, and its risks of employment based on time and resources as well as perception from the international community.

Uprisings

Uprisings, as defined above, have transpired in different forms throughout history. The deconstruction of uprisings to their fundamental principles is critical to gain an understanding of current knowledge and the implications for strategic thinking. This literature review examines theories of uprisings and social movements to gain an appreciation of what type of movement would best facilitate moderate reform for the purpose of supporting US national interests.

The roots of an uprising or social movement are as varied as are the regions in which they occur. Social movement theory and the study of collective action encompasses the study of uprisings. Social movement research in early history focused on Marxist analysis of class struggle.[9] Marx argued that throughout history, class struggles represented a constant fight that often ended in revolutionary change.[10]

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[9] Klaus Weber and Brayden King, "Social Movement Theory and Organization Studies" in *Oxford Handbook of Sociology, Social Theory and Organization Studies*, ed. Paul Adler, Paul du Gay, Glenn Morgan, and Mike Reed (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 488.

[10] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto: A Modern Edition* (New York: Verso, 1998), 34-35.

He outlined the process of the proletariat rising against the bourgeoisie, at every stage becoming more organized and effective in their efforts leading to revolutionary change.[11] Marxism and class-based collective action became the theoretical framework for social movement and collective action research in the 19th and early 20th century.[12]

As the field of sociology matured, social movement research revolved around collective behavior which grouped movements with riots, gangs, and crowds.[13] Social movement theory saw collective action as "irrational, spontaneous, emotional, and emergent," and defined this behavior as a breakdown of social order.[14] The violent times of the early 19th and 20th century, following the industrial revolution, shaped the study of social movement behavior and created a tendency to view collective behavior through the lens of disruption to the social order.[15] The understanding of social movement behavior drew its origin from Marxist revolutionary behavior.

Social movement theory saw a shift as academia began to understand the effects of non-violent action pioneered by Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. Gene Sharp, senior scholar and founder of the Albert Einstein Institution, conducted an in-depth study of the methods used by Gandhi in achieving tactical and strategic effects through non-violent action.[16] Dr. Sharp asserted in his book, *Gandhi Wields the Weapon of Moral Power*, that Gandhi built a just world through non-violent action based on the philosophy of *satyagraha*,

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[11] Ibid., 44-48.

[12] Mancur Olson, *Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 102-110.

[13] Weber, "Social Movement Theory and Organization Studies," 488.

[14] Ibid., 2-4.

[15] Ibid., 4.

[16] The Albert Einstein Institution seeks to advance the study and strategic use of non-violent action in conflict. Dr. Gene Sharp founded the institution in 1983. It encourages the research and study on methods of non-violent action and shares the results globally facilitating movements world-wide. See "About Us," Albert Einstein Institution, accessed 15 January 2016, http://www.aeinstein.org/about/.

the 'adherence to the truth.'"[17] To Gandhi, the means and ends should both be equally pure, and such social strategy and tactics can build a new social order through a constructive program that facilitates voluntary constructive works.[18] Dr. Sharp's research on the methods used by Gandhi and the philosophy of *satyagraha* had a profound effect on his future work as well as on that of the rest of academia.

In the 1960s, social movements around the globe no longer spawned from class struggles, but ostensibly from the desire for civil rights (concerning race, gender, etc.), equality, peace, and variety of other issues.[19] Previous models no longer applied to the sophisticated movements that exhibited hierarchical structures with specified goals. Social movement theorists reformulated theories based on three main components. First, scholars replaced the belief that the permeation of unrest in a crowd is the primary mechanism of collective action.[20] One prominent theory that arose is the resource mobilization approach, which adopted a framework of industrialization to explain social movements.[21] Resource mobilization theory became the dominant framework for sociologists in analyzing social movements and collective action until the 1990s.[22]

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[17] Gene Sharp, *Gandhi Wields the Weapon of Moral Power* (Ahmedabad, India: Navajivan Press, 1960), accessed 12 January 2016, https://www.gandhiheritageportal.org/other-books/gandhi-wields-the-weapon-of-moral-power#page/8/mode/2up, 4.

[18] Ibid., 3-5.

[19] Weber, "Social Movement Theory and Organization Studies," 491.

[20] Ibid.

[21] John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (May, 1977): 1216, accessed 14 February 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2777934. The theory of resource mobilization called for the aggregation of resources, organization, the involvement of individuals outside of the collective, the application of supply and demand model to the flow of resources, and a cost-benefit analysis in explaining the phenomena and process of the movement.

[22] Steven M. Beuchler, "Beyond Resource Mobilization? Emerging Trends in Social Movement Theory," *The Sociological Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (May, 1993): 217, accessed 14 February 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4120699.

Second, theorists began focusing on strategic choices movements made to optimize effectiveness in recruiting and their chances of political success. This framework, named the political opportunity structure, provided an explanation for when and how actors mobilized; selective incentives calculated against the costs and barriers to participation ultimately motivate actors to act.[23] Third, scholars shifted their understanding of the origins of contention from the conflict over distribution of resources and political domination to the penetration of institutional systems of the market and the state into the individual's private sphere.[24] These trends continued until the 1990s when social movement theorists began incorporating organizational theory to expand their understanding of how movements worked.

In the 1990s, a fusion of organizational theory and social movement theory occurred.[25] Social movement theorists derived principles found in institutional theory and network analysis to better explain change in social movement organizations.[26] Inversely, social movement theory introduced mechanisms to organizational theorists that related to grassroots change.[27] A new trend emerged regarding patterns of collective action, as the focus appeared to shift away from the state. One estimate indicated that forty percent of protests between 1960 and 1995 actually targeted non-state actors, including corporations. This sparked more interest in the study of mobilization against firms, markets, and other entities more directly akin to organizational theorist interests.[28]

Additionally, a study conducted by Steven M. Beuchler, published in *The Sociology Quarterly*, evaluated emerging trends in social movement theory and deduced that the resource mobilization framework prevalent from the 1960s discounted the significance of grievances in the motivation of

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[23] Weber, "Social Movement Theory and Organization Studies," 492.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., 493.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 494.

[28] Ibid., 498.

collective action, and marginalized ideology.[29] Beuchler asserts that resource mobilization theory

dismissed ideology and grievances as background factors secondary to the emphasis on resources and

opportunity in accounting for collective action and persistence of the movement. In his study of the

women's suffrage movement at the turn of the 20th Century, he argued that politicization of grievances

occurred through the development and diffusion of feminist ideology. This caused women to develop a

collective identity resulting in a view of their social environment through a lens of potential resources for

mobilization.[30] Other academics adopted the study of grievances and ideology, and it evolved into a new

facet of social movement theory.

The theoretical link of grievances, ideology, and violence existed in research of other disciplines

for some time. Grievances can vary depending on the population, the country, region, or any other

number of reasons. Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation and Ted Gurr's theory of relative

deprivation provide a conceptual framework for how grievances emerge within the individual. Maslow

argues that all humans have hierarchical needs.[31] As the lower basic needs are met (air, food, water),

higher needs (love, esteem) emerge.[32] Consistent attainment of higher needs can lead to another

phenomena that Maslow calls the autonomy of higher needs where the individual no longer is dependent

on lower needs.[33] In fact, it can lead individuals to despise the lower needs that made their newly acquired

'higher life' possible.[34] Gurr's theory of relative deprivation, as described below, provides explanation for

this phenomena.

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[29] Beuchler, "Beyond Resource Mobilization?" 221-222.

[30] Ibid., 222.

[31] Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality,* 3rd ed. (New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 1987), 56.

[32] Ibid., 33.

[33] Ibid., 42.

[34] Ibid.

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The theory of relative deprivation refers to the perceived discrepancy between an individual's value expectations and value capabilities.[35] Value expectation, in Gurr's theory, refers to what people feel they are entitled to, and value capability is what conditions people should be able to attain based on the social means available and their own skills.[36] Gurr argues that the grievance that arises from the perceived relative deprivation is the "basic, instigating condition for participation in collective violence."[37] An individual's value capability and value expectation begins to take a greater significance as higher needs emerge. Frustration and discontent appears when there is a disparity between value expectations and value capabilities. This discontent then diffuses through a community through the social interactions between the individual and his community.[38] The diffusion of discontent often occurs in the form of ideology that binds the community, such as in the case study of women's suffrage conducted by Beuchler.[39] According to psychological theory and group conflict theory, the greater the intensity of discontent, resulting from deprivation, the greater the likelihood of violence.[40]

Gurr proposes a causal sequence of how discontent leads to political violence, which is useful in developing a theory for action to achieve limited objectives.[41] The first step is the development of

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[35] Tedd Gurr, *Why Men Rebel,* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 24.

[36] Ibid., 13.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), 3, 52, 61. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman's theory of the sociology of knowledge describes the interrelation of the individual and the social system that he lives in. Berger and Luckman assert that social situations develop, transmit, and maintain what passes for knowledge in a society. Essentially, society constructs the reality of the individual, which he contributes too through the externalization of himself.[38] This is a dialectic process in that as the individual contributes to the social system, he is also receiving from it, thereby re-forming his output. This interaction within a community facilitates the transfer of resentment towards an external factor (i.e. the government), which the community collectively sees as the cause of their shared suffering or grievance.

[39] Beuchler, "Beyond Resource Mobilization?" 222.

[40] Gurr, *Why Men Rebel,* 13.

[41] Ibid., 12-14.

discontent as described above.[42] The next step to violence is the politicization of discontent, or the linkage

of the discontent to a political object or actor.[43] The final step of Gurr's causal sequence is the

actualization of violent action against political objects or actors.[44] According to Gurr, the politicization of

discontent is a necessary condition for violence to occur in politics.[45]

  Violence in response to frustrations is but one form of expressing political demands or opposing

undesirable policies to the state.[46] The violence that occurs takes on different forms and varies in

magnitude. It can span the spectrum from simple unrest expressed through peaceful protest to revolution

and civil war. According to French theorist David Galula, revolutionary war is "an explosive upheaval—

sudden, brief, spontaneous, and unplanned."[47] Other theorists such as Misagh Parsa describe revolution as

"rapid, basic transformations of society and class structures carried through class-based revolts from

below."[48] Regardless of theorist, revolutions are often rapid and at times extremely violent. Gurr presents

a principle distinction between revolution and other forms of violence. The three forms of violence he

describes in broad terms are turmoil, conspiracy (coups, assassinations, etc.), and internal war (which he

correlates with civil war and revolution).[49] Gurr defines turmoil as spontaneous, unorganized political

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[42] Ibid., 13.

[43] Ibid., 12.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., 14.

[46] Ibid., 4.

[47] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 2.

[48] Mishagh Parsa, *States, Ideologies, & Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of Iran, Nicaragua and the Philippines* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 6.

[49] Gurr, *Why Men Rebel,* 11.

violence with substantial participation, a definition that is similar to that of this monograph's definition of uprising.[50]

Sociologist Karen Sternheimer, who differentiates between civil unrest, riots, and rebellions, provides another classification scheme. Sternheimer asserts that they are all considered forms of uprisings, as they are a disruption of the social order in response to something the participants feel is unjust.[51] In her case study of the Los Angeles riots, she delineated between those actually conducting actions to bring attention to their legitimate grievance and those who saw the opportunity to commit crime with little fear of consequences.[52] Her observations coincide with Gurr's assertion that, in order to prevent the devolution of purpose into random violence, the politicization and focus of discontent is necessary.[53] Sternheimer and Gurr's observations lead to a larger deduction that unchecked violence by either the state or the people can lead to increased violence and possibly revolution.[54]

Social movements, collective action, and revolutions are not always violent, though. Dr. Gene Sharp pioneered a theory of nonviolent action based on the principle that "people do not always do what they are told to do, and sometimes they act in ways that have been forbidden."[55] If people continue to withhold their cooperation, obedience, and continue to defy norms established by the system they live in, the government or system will no longer have power. Sharp asserts that nonviolent action is neither passive nor submissive, it is but one response of acting effectively in politics. He classifies one-hundred

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Karen Sternheimer, "Civil Unrest, Riots, and Rebellions: What's the difference?," *Everyday Sociology Blog*, 3 May 2012, accessed 3 Oct 2015, http://www.everydaysociologyblog.com /2012/05/civil-unrest-riots-and-rebellions-whats-the-difference.html.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Gurr, *Why Men Rebel,* 13-14.

[54] Ibid., 232-235. This is based on Gurr's reference to coercive balance and the presumption of justifying counterforce in order to deter force from the dissident. He also highlights the dynamic of a greater force response instigating intensified counter-action.

[55] Sharp, *How Non-Violent Struggle Works* (Boston, MA: Albert Einstein Institution, 2013), 17.

and ninety eight specific methods of nonviolent action into three major groups: protest and persuasion, noncooperation, nonviolent intervention. Sharp further breaks down noncooperation into three sub-groups that include social, economic, and political noncooperation.[56] Strategically, nonviolent action counters the violent expression of the government or system's power indirectly, through undermining the sources of power that the government requires. In his publication, *There are Realistic Alternatives*, he outlines sources of power that any government requires to secure and maintain the political power.[57] Sharp also outlines a technique for strategic, or long-term, planning that increases the effectiveness of the movement.[58]

Sharp has multiple publications describing various techniques targeting various entities through nonviolent action. One of note is his publication *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, originally published in Bangkok in 1993 by the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma, which outlines a realistic step-by-step approach for replacing a dictatorship through political defiance.[59] Sharp asserts that the execution of political defiance is through psychological, social, economic, and political means applied by the population and society with the intent of separating the dictatorship from its sources of power mentioned above.[60]

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[56] Ibid., 17-29.

[57] Sharp, *There are Realistic Alternatives* (Boston, MA: Albert Einstein Institution, 2003), 11-12. Dr. Sharp describes these sources of power as authority or legitimacy; human resources, or people who obey, cooperate, and or assist the ruler; skills and knowledge; intangible factors that include psychological and ideological factors; material sources which involves control or access to property, natural resources, etc.; and sanctions or punishments, real or threatened, that ensure cooperation. He claims that these sources "depend on acceptance of the regime, on the submission and obedience of the population, and on the cooperation of many people and institutions of the society."

[58] Ibid., 25-29.

[59] Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, 4th ed. (Boston, MA: Albert Einstein Institution, 2010), 29.

[60] Ibid., 30.

Recent trends in social movement research indicate a new focus on the operationalization of uprisings and social movement techniques by state actors.[61] In the May 2014 Moscow Conference on International Security (MCIS), sponsored by the Russian Minister of Defense, the focus centered on the role of popular protests and international security.[62] Top Russian military and diplomatic officials argued that popular uprisings, specifically the 'color revolutions', are "a new form of warfare invented by Western governments seeking to remove independently-minded national governments in favor of ones controlled by the West."[63] From the Russian point of view, there are links to US intervention dating back to uprisings in Serbia in 2000, continuing on to recent uprisings including the Arab Spring (2010-present) and Venezuela (2014). The overall intent of the US, according to Russia, is to eventually force regime change in Russia itself. To contend with these suspicions, Russia has developed a counter-strategy that combines political and military actions. Russia has also employed the technique of encouraging pro-Russian uprisings in military action in the Crimea and eastern Ukraine.[64]

Others argue that social movements will replace conventional warfare as a whole. Political activist and author Micah White published an article based on the 2014 MCIS arguing that governments will increasingly rely on social movements to topple terrorist states and influence autocratic regimes.[65] White asserts that direct confrontation, or conventional war, has become impractical, and that a turn to social movements is a viable strategic response. White believes that despite inherent dangers of

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[61] Operationalization refers to the application of uprisings and social movements in conjunction with military operations to achieve political goals.

[62] Dmitry Gorenburg, "Countering Color Revolutions: Russia's New Security Strategy and Its Implications for US Policy," *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo* no. 342 (September 2014): 1, accessed 11 January 2016, http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/Pepm342_Gorenburg_Sept2014.pdf.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., 2-5.

[65] Micah White, "Social Movements Are The Next Big Weapon," DefenseOne.com, 22 December 2015, accessed 11 February 2016, http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2015/12/social-movements-are-next-big-weapon/124707/.

employing social movements tactically, it potentially provides the spark to ignite a global democratic movement and an opportunity for the end of conventional war.[66]

Recent research emanating from the US Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) explores the potential for utilizing social movements in support of UW. Doowan Lee, a lecturer at NPS, published an article in 2013 arguing that it is possible to enhance the operational flexibility and strategic utility of UW by "incorporating the logic of social mobilization and understanding of how to leverage existing social infrastructure."[67] He identifies strategic drawbacks associated with externally supported insurgencies and coup d'états. Drawbacks include: a poor track record in terms of the durable influence of the United States; unfavorable long-term geopolitical consequences; and diminished indigenous legitimacy. Lee proposes a social movement approach to UW that enhances the robustness of an irregular force by leveraging existing social networks in four ways: to enhance the legitimacy of the movement, to facilitate 'bloc recruitment', to promote a more institutionalized form of demobilization, and to limit the chances of revealing US intervention. Lee concludes that by tapping into political fractures, informal social networks, and locally resonating frames, social movement theory can enhance the strategic flexibility and social support of UW.[68]

Additionally, a NPS thesis written the same year fused facets of social movement theory into building and sustaining an underground as a part of UW. The author, Ryan Bortnyk, took resource and population mobilization theories as well as organizational practices and applied them to underground movements.[69] Bortnyk identified the underground as the "mainstay of resistance" that can leverage the population, overtly or covertly gain support for the movement, and infiltrate institutions of government

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[66] Ibid.

[67] Doowan Lee, "A Social Movement Approach To Unconventional Warfare," *Special Warfare* 26, no. 3 (July-September 2013): 27.

[68] Ibid., 28-31.

[69] Ryan P. Bortnyk, "Grounding the Underground" (Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2013), 1.

for subversion.[70] He asserted that current UW doctrine underspecified the importance of how to organize an underground. Utilizing works of Lenin, Mao, and Giap, he proposes a more underground-focused approach to UW planning.[71] The underground- focused approach determines three essential tasks that are necessary to build and sustain an underground organization. The first task is to establish a professional cadre that is capable of conducting a census of local grievances and constructing a narrative that resonates, which will ultimately allow the cadre to maximize social movement operations at their level. The second task is to develop cells within social networks that can enhance security, lower the cost of mobilization, and facilitate expansion. The third and final task is to develop mass organizations from existing social networks that can act as buffers, diverting the state's attention away from more mainstream groups.[72] Bortnyk concluded that the examination of a potential methodology for constructing an underground through social movement theory facilitates support to a UW campaign.[73]

This review highlighted theories and facets of social movements that would best facilitate moderate reform and allow greater accuracy in specific targeting for the purpose of supporting US national interests. There exists a wide variety of social movements that vary in their levels of violence. Less violent forms of social movements are more conducive to moderate reform. Tempering violence expressed in social movements correlates with limiting or preventing overreaction by the state's security apparatus. Moderation in approach and expression in social movements amplifies the effectiveness and ability for specificity in regards to targeting by decreasing the potential for unchecked violence and further escalation to revolution.

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[70] Ibid., 6.

[71] Ibid., 6-7.

[72] Ibid., 10-17.

[73] Ibid., 107-108.

Unconventional Warfare

UW as a viable option to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or replace a belligerent regime has seen a resurgence as a strategic policy after successful campaigns in Afghanistan with the Northern Alliance and in Northern Iraq with the Kurdish Resistance.[74] Additionally, recent research in the utility of applying social movement theory in support of UW campaigns sheds new light on operational possibilities. Historically, three distinct eras exist of UW theory and doctrine from the US perspective: the first runs from post-World War II 1945 to pre-Vietnam War in the mid-1960s; the second era runs from the Vietnam War to pre 9/11; and the third, post 9/11 to the present. In this current period, the US Army Special Forces (SF) Command shifted focus to better understand UW as one of its original core tasks.[75] This is a change in that in earlier periods, particularly the Vietnam War era, SF was attempting to distance itself from UW. While there is a rich field of literature throughout all three periods, this monograph mostly focuses on the third era, which has the most valuable documents and manuals that describe UW as a concept and highlight the strategic and political considerations coupled with the tactical risk involved in employing UW as an option. Specifically, this monograph examines literature on the doctrinal models for assessing the feasibility and employment of UW as an option.

The employment of UW posed a strategic risk to the USG since its roots in the Office of Strategic Studies (OSS) operations conducted during the Second World War. A study presented in 1992 titled *Legal and Moral Constraints on Low-Intensity Conflicts* specifically describes the negative connotations UW campaigns have on a modern democracy that endorses liberalism.[76] The study addresses the question of whether democracies should "answer fire with fire," and resort to UW as a means to compel an

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[74] Mark Grdovic, Special Warfare Center School Publication (SWCS) 09-01 *A Leader's Handbook to Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 9, 37-38.

[75] Martinez, "From Foreign Internal Defense to Unconventional Warfare," 18.

[76] Alberto R. Collier ed., "Unconventional Warfare, Liberal Democracies, and the International Order," in *Legal and Moral Constraints on Low-Intensity Conflict* 67, 3-21, (New Port, Rhode Island: Naval War College, 1992), 11.

adversary to quit its own UW efforts.[77] It responds with three claims. First, based on a Jeffersonian view

that judges means and ends on the highest American civic values, democracies should not stoop to the

immorality that comes with UW. Second, democracies that resort to UW end up corrupting themselves.

The idea is that utilizing "deception, secrecy and treachery in foreign policy lead to the cultivation and

spread of similar attitudes and values within the domestic political process."[78] The third claim, which has

the most applicability to this research, is that democracies are not well-equipped to conduct or carry out

UW. Attempts can and often do end in failure, resulting in moral and political embarrassment both

internationally and domestically as well as a loss of the moral high ground.[79] From the US perspective,

this lack of being well-equipped to carry out UW could be due to the social and psychological conditions

inherent in US culture, as well as the political fickleness that exists in the United States.

There are several historical examples that validate this third claim from the US perspective,

particularly in the infancy of UW from early-1950s to late 1980s, which ended in de-legitimization of

USG efforts. These examples highlight the political risk of conducting UW. One of the first experiments

with regime change was a joint effort between the Eisenhower administration and British operatives in

removing Mohammed Mossadegh from the office of Prime Minister of Iran, known as Operation Ajax, in

1953.[80] Though a success in achieving its objectives, the operation resulted in the complete consolidation

of power under the oppressive rule of the Shah of Iran. Some scholars arguably link the culpability of the

1979 Islamic Revolution saturated with anti-American overtones onto Operation Ajax.[81] In 1954, several

entities of the USG sponsored a military coup resulting in the overthrow of the elected government of

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[77] Ibid., 14.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars: CIA & Pentagon Covert Operations Since World War II* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 95.

[81] Krysta Wise, "Islamic Revolution of 1979: The Downfall of American-Iranian Relations," *Legacy* 11, no. 1, (2011): 8, accessed 29 March 2015, http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/legacy/vol11/iss1/2.

Guatemala. Ultimately, exposed follow-on governments suffered a decrease in the legitimacy of their

authority resulting in five decades of far more oppressive rule than the original government.[82] The US

attempted another unsuccessful UW campaign in 1961 following the Cuban Revolution to re-instate a

US-friendly regime. The failure of the Bay of Pigs operation resulted in Cuba's direct alignment with the

Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War.[83] In the 1980s, the USG sponsored a UW campaign against

the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, ultimately replacing the government, but the ensuing Iran-

Contra scandal degraded US standing in the international community.[84]

      The risk of UW operations also exists at the tactical level. Tactical level risk carries both strategic

and political ramifications due to the sensitivity and level of approval for UW operations. One of the

larger risks are logistical concerns. Logistical lines of communication may be long and fluid into denied

areas.[85] The introduction of US material may complicate the situation further, as there may be sensitivity

about the US presence in the target nation.[86] Additionally, normal command and control tactics and

techniques do not transfer well to UW missions. Forces conducting UW may be out of contact for

extended periods of time depending on the target nation's capability to track peculiar electronic

signatures.[87] Legal considerations also pose a substantial tactical risk, as the standards that apply to all

military operations applies to UW. Actions taken by irregular forces affiliated with SOF must also

comply with the same legal restrictions SOF operates under.[88]

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[82] Grdovic, *A Leader's Handbook to Unconventional Warfare*, 33.

[83] Jaime Suchlicki, "Historical Setting," in *Cuba: A Country Study*, ed. Rex A. Hudson (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 2002), 71.

[84] Grdovic, *A Leader's Handbook to Unconventional Warfare*, 36.

[85] TC 18-01, 3-10.

[86] Ibid., 3-9

[87] Ibid., 3-13.

[88] Ibid., 3-15.

These high levels of tactical and strategic risk associated with UW operations limit the willingness of the USG to employ UW as an option. Political and military strategists typically reserve the option of UW as a strategy of last resort, based on what can go wrong, as articulated above. Yet, at times, it may be necessary for the USG to undertake subversive acts in belligerent states. While additional options for smaller-scale involvement in targeted countries might be useful, little research exists on such options.

Recent doctrine categorizes UW campaigns into two types: in support of general war involving follow-on conventional US forces; and in support of limited war that does not overtly involve US forces.[89] Given the focus of this monograph on activities that are even more limited than UW, this literature review looks only at UW campaigns conducted in support of limited war.

Training Circular (TC) 18-01, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*, has a seven phase model that includes the following: phase I-preparation, phase II-initial contact, phase III-infiltration, phase IV-organization, phase V-build up, phase VI-employment, and phase VII-transition. This outlines a UW campaign supporting a general war scenario.[90] LTC Mark Grdovic, a UW scholar, presents an alternative that is better suited to support a limited war scenario. The alternative nine phase model consists of the following: phase I-preparation, phase II-initial contact, phase III-removal of selected indigenous personnel from the operational area, phase IV-training for selected indigenous personnel, phase V-reintroduction of indigenous personnel into the operational area, phase VI-organization of the resistance forces, phase VII-build up, phase VIII-sustained combat operations, and phase VIX-transition.[91]

The difference between the doctrinal seven phase model and LTC Grdovic's nine phase model is the removal of indigenous personnel from the operational area, training, and re-insertion back, in order to minimize the US footprint in the targeted area. This methodology provides a framework to consider in

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[89] Grdovic, *A Leader's Handbook to Unconventional Warfare*, 17.

[90] TC 18-01, 1-9.

[91] Grdovic, *A Leader's Handbook to Unconventional Warfare*, 20.

planning a phased limited war operation in an environment with increased political or cultural sensitivities. Removing personnel from the environment for training alleviates security concerns and decreases the probability of compromise for the UW operation.

Although research exists regarding UW campaigns in support of limited war, little research exists on options during peace time. In assessing the spectrum of the gray zone, the interaction between nations extends from peaceful diplomatic interaction to war. There is a rich history of UW as an option to exercise in this gray zone as highlighted by a recent article written by a collection of prominent scholars led by General Joseph L. Votel, the current commander of USSOCOM.[92] UW as an option in the gray zone tends to lean closer towards war due to its more aggressive intent of enabling a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or replace a belligerent regime. However, this monograph argues that there can also be an option which leans closer to peace, a gray zone activity which provides space for policy and diplomacy. This option, TCA, can capitalize on vulnerabilities during peace time with the purpose of enacting reform-oriented change for the sake of US interests through persuading and/or co-opting existing organizations.

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[92] Joseph L. Votel, Charles T. Cleveland, Charles T. Connett, and Will Irwin, "Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (January-March 2016): 101-109. This article was written by: General Joseph L. Votel, US Army, and current Commander of USSOCOM; Lieutenant General Charles T. Cleveland, US Army (Ret.), former Commander of US Army Special Operations Command; Colonel Charles T. Connett, US Army, current Director of the Commander's Initiatives Group at Headquarters US Army Special Operations Command; Lieutenant Colonel Will Irwin, US Army (Ret.), current resident Senior Fellow at the Joint Special Operations University. It discusses the history of UW campaigns during the Cold War, the potential for US Special Operations Forces (SOF) increased involvement in gray zone operations, and recommendations for changes to training, education, doctrine, and material support as well as identifies existing policy gaps.

Theory of Targeted Collective Action

The intent of targeted collective action is to provide a less violent or nonviolent alternative that seeks to incite reform-oriented social movements that target specific national policies or singular actors (political and/or non-political) who are not acting in line with US interests. The idea is to exploit a vulnerability and influence the political system to enact minor to moderate reform through indigenous collective action during times of peace or within the confines of the gray zone.

This monograph argues that inciting an uprising is a less invasive alternative to UW in achieving reform within a state in support of US interests. Therefore, it is important to highlight the distinction between UW and the type of activity this research is analyzing. The intent of UW operations is to "exploit a hostile power's political, military, economic, and psychological vulnerabilities by developing and sustaining resistance forces to accomplish U.S. strategic objectives."[93] Enabling the resistance movement is pivotal to achieving effects on a belligerent regime. Enabling occurs through an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area. UW operations enact change through or with indigenous forces within the targeted state either by coercion, disruption of normal politics (from the perspective of the state), or complete overthrow of the government.[94] "The end result comes from the combined effects of 'armed conflict', conducted predominantly by the guerrillas, and 'subversion', conducted predominantly by the underground."[95] In contrast, TCA does not require establishing or working through an underground, auxiliary, or a guerrilla force. It also does not seek to coerce, or fully disrupt, normal politics. Instead, it seeks to leverage existing organizations that operate overtly in the established social infrastructure of the targeted state to influence the political apparatus to make change.

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[93] TC 18-01, 1-1.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Grdovic, *A Leader's Handbook to Unconventional Warfare*, 10.

TCA seeks to enact reform by persuading or co-opting an existing organization to take action against the targeted policy or person by amplifying that organization's efforts. TCA is not suitable for all problem sets in all states; it is necessary to conduct a thorough assessment to confirm certain factors exist that increase the probability of success in the targeted state. This monograph provides three assessment criteria. First, the specific policy or person must be suitable for targeting. Second, the targeted state must fit certain criteria. Finally, the available organizations within the state must fit a certain profile. To determine if propitious conditions exist, a comprehensive approach is necessary to better understand the operational environment of the state and facilitate very specific targeting of what needs to change. This analysis is detailed below.

Not all policies or people make for suitable targets. The targeted policies or actors must have some tie to a vulnerability within the state. Once identified, a direct correlation of the vulnerability and the specific target is necessary for exploitation.[96] The fabrication of a vulnerability or of the link to the target degrades the legitimacy of the narrative. In order to determine a target vulnerability and preexisting, exploitable narrative, you must assess social, economic, political, and possibly military conditions within the state that contribute to grievances.[97] The potential for building a legitimate narrative is critical to successfully exploiting the vulnerability. Once the nominated target is determined as suitable, next comes assessing the state's potential for targeting.

The state must possess certain characteristics that make it a viable target for collective action. Not meeting these minimum requirements severely inhibits the potential for exercising TCA as an option. First, unless war is an acceptable risk, the belligerent regime or state should not be a current overt adversary of the United States (such as Iran, North Korea, and arguably Russia) as the risk of entering

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[96] Lee, "A Social Movement Approach to UW," 30. This is similar to target vilification discussed in diagnostic framing as a part of building a good narrative.

[97] Martinez, "From Foreign Internal Defense to Unconventional Warfare," 160. This thesis presents a good framework that identifies fragile state indicators that recognize vulnerabilities who contribute to failed US sponsored Foreign Internal Defense campaigns in supported nations (see figure 2).

into a war are too great if the TCA is compromised. Additionally, any compromised action would have de-stabilizing effects on entire regions and perhaps globally.

Second, the state must have a level of fitness and flexibility that can withstand dissent and allow for policy change to occur.[98] According to scholar Neil Harrison, the state is a system that is dynamic and constantly struggling with the balance of power both internally and externally.[99] Political scientist Walter Clemens defines fitness as "the ability to cope with complexity."[100] A state chosen for TCA must have the fitness to withstand dissent. Destabilizing effects of a social movement in an inflexible state may cause the collapse of the state and transition into revolution or civil war, which is not the intent of TCA. Also, a state that possesses an entrenched regime that is exclusive and resistant to change will require drastic measures, usually in the form of drastic violence, to force a change.[101]

Third, the state as an institution must have some authority with a recognized, semi-legitimate security apparatus in place. It is important to have rules or norms in place within the institution that the people recognize as legitimate and the populace tends to comply with.[102] Additionally, a quasi-legitimate authority figure (security apparatus of the state) must exist to serve as a backstop in preventing the

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[98] Walter C. Clemens, Jr., "Understanding and Coping with Ethnic Conflict and Development Issues in Post-Soviet Eurasia," in *Complexity in World Politics: Concepts and Methods of New Paradigm*, ed. Neil E. Harrison (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 74-75. This assertion is based on Walter C. Clemens' argument that a system must have a level of fitness that permits sufficient flexibility within its structure to allow for change to occur.

[99] Neil E. Harrison, ed., *Complexity in World Politics: Concepts and Methods of New Paradigm* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 4-6, 11.

[100] Clemens, "Ethnic Conflict and Development," 74-75. The survivability of a system is dependent on its fitness, or its ability to process and deal with many variables. Political scientist Walter C. Clemens Jr., measures a system's fitness in its ability to process information about, and deal with, various variables perceived through feedback.

[101] See above and Parsa, *States, Ideologies, & Social Revolutions*, 11.

[102] Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics," *International Organization* 53, no. 2 (1999): 380, accessed 12 Nov 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2601393. This concept is derived from analyses by theorist Ian Hurd in a study that analyzed legitimacy, authority, and models of control in international relations.

violation of human rights and the devolution of a politicized social movement into random violence or

revolution. This assertion correlates with the earlier observation that unchecked violence by either the

state or the people can lead to revolution.[103]

Key to achieving limited objectives, therefore, is to limit violence below a certain threshold that

both the state and population feel is acceptable.[104] The threshold of violence will vary from state to state,

and population to population. It is dependent on characteristics of the regime in power and its politics as

well as cultural proclivities. Many of those same characteristics give probability to the scope and intensity

of the state's response to violence and its ability to enact necessary change requested by the people.

Even if a targeted state should meet the above criteria, it is best if external intervention in the

state is not wholly out of the question, should the need arise as a last resort. Either a precedence or

opportunity for diplomatic or military intervention is helpful, and must remain a contingency plan. TCA

is not without risk; however, by focusing on states which are able to adapt and which have groups able to

pressure the state into action, such explicit external intervention should be unlikely.

The fact remains that when its environment changes, the state must adapt or disappear. This

phenomena occurs in three case studies conducted by Misagh Parsa on Iran, Nicaragua, and the

Philippines which examined the respective revolutions in each that occurred in the twentieth century.

Each state developed what Parsa called an 'exclusive rule' that centralized power and repressed any

dissent.[105] These states resorted to violence to contend with the many variables that threatened their

respective systems.[106] When that failed, the states lacked the flexibility to adjust to the changing

environment, as exhibited through the fall of the regimes through revolution. The flexibility of the state to

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[103] Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, 232-235. This is based on Gurr's reference to coercive balance and the presumption of justifying counterforce in order to deter force from the dissident. He also highlights the dynamic of a greater force response instigating intensified counter-action.

[104] Ibid., 235.

[105] Parsa, *States, Ideologies, & Social Revolutions*, 11.

[106] Ibid.

adjust to the changing environment, the state's fitness, directly correlates to its survivability. This example adds clarity to the importance of state characteristics desirable to enact change as discussed. Once the state is determined to be suitably flexible, next comes the choice of the right group, one which cares about the right issue, to serve as a proxy.

The intent of collective action is to leverage existing organizations that operate overtly within the targeted regime. Two key characteristics necessary for determining suitability for TCA are: (1) they must operate overtly within the government's acceptable level of dissent, and (2) their interests are somewhat in line with US interests for the purpose of enacting minor to moderate reform.

Much greater latitude is present when choosing an organization for TCA than in a UW campaign, because objectives are limited and do not require a fundamental alignment with US interests. Instead, a peripheral commonality is actually preferred, as this will further decrease the US signature. During the initial assessment of the organization, confirmation of common interests is essential. In essence, the commonality must be based on the group's grievances that are directly associated with the targeted US objective. In further assessing the group (or groups) as a viable option, it is important to assess the modus operandi of the group to determine the propensity for violence, the type of violence they are inclined to resort too, and what usually triggers those reactions. As discussed earlier, the magnitude of violence and the form the violence will take cannot be predicted with extreme accuracy, but it can be weighted through probability based on historical precedence, relative deprivation, and level of frustration (real or perceived).[107] What makes the group angry, and how they will express that anger, is the most critical part of assessing the viability of groups.

Historical analysis of the group will show the typical level of violence that the group does not exceed. It is critical to remain below the threshold of violence of the authoritative figure in order to prevent a violent over-reaction by the state. Historical analysis will also show the group's parameters of violence, which are the conditions or physical locations where the group typically feels comfortable

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[107] Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, 9-10, 24.

expressing their form of violence. Additionally, an analysis of the group members communicate with each another will facilitate the initial contact process.

Carrying Out Targeted Collective Action

Ideally, TCA is a low signature, low risk activity that relies on little to no US personnel on the ground. The premise is to take the vulnerability identified, fundamentally connect it to the target, and tailor a narrative in a way that will enflame the organization(s) chosen (i.e. politicize the vulnerability). Once the narrative is created, it needs to be disseminated in order to execute the TCA.

David Snow and Robert Benford developed a model for constructing an effective narrative made up of three component parts referred to as framing tasks: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing.[108] Diagnostic framing is the identification of the source of the vulnerability, and linking the target to the vulnerability. The key component of diagnostic framing is focusing the blame or the responsibility.[109] This is similar to Gurr's politicization of discontent, or the linkage of the discontent to a political object or actor.[110] An issue that arises from focusing the blame is reaching a consensus among the social movement organizations regarding the source or target. This clarity in linkage is imperative, as friction is avoidable given proper framing of the information delivered to the organization. The next step, prognostic framing, is the articulation of a proposed solution to the problem.[111] This process will be more dependent on the social movement organizations.[112] Proper linking of the target to the problem will channelize options for the organization towards more desirable solutions proposed from the perspective of the US interests. Special attention is necessary to ensure proposed solutions do not

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[108] David Snow and Robert Benford, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 615.

[109] Ibid., 616.

[110] Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, 12.

[111] Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements," 616.

[112] Ibid., 617.

deviate too far from desired courses of action. Finally, motivational framing serves as the rallying call for collective action. This involves the development of a socially constructed vocabulary that resonates among the participants of the collective action as well as the rest of the social network.[113] It is critical not to superimpose American vernacular in this message. Cultural nuances and ground truth will limit US involvement during this process; at this point, execution is commencing.

The next step following the framing of the information to build the narrative is choosing a mechanism for delivery from ones already in use by the organization. Information distribution can be direct or indirect. Sent directly to either a witting or unwitting individual or just spread broadly across a medium frequently visited by the organization(s) (such as social media, or campus bulletin boards in universities). Physical contact is not necessary, but may be useful if the organization is open to external logistical support.[114]

As with any type of US-sponsored covert or clandestine activity occurring in foreign soil, TCA carries risk. The tactical risk of compromising US personnel is minimal because of the small signature involved. However, any compromise of activity would still result with truthful (though potentially exaggerated or manipulated) information coming to light about a grievance and the corresponding target. The impact of the outcome of the TCA may be unpredictable; the process may continue to cause an uprising despite compromise and could still result in change. Operational and strategic risk would also exist in the realm of perceptions of the US in the domestic and international community, but plausible deniability of the USG remains available because of the low signature. Also, the opportunity to express diplomatic concern for an issue (the vulnerability) that is severely impacting the welfare of that country's population remains plausible even if complete deniability is not an option.

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[113] Ibid.

[114] Logistical support is not the focus of this research but should be available with tailored packages prepared with material originating from the local economy. Support will be case dependent.

TCA is not a traditional military activity as defined by the Conference Report to the Intelligence Authorization Act of 1991, which tests whether actions constitute a traditional military activity by four elements:

1. Activities conducted by U.S. military personnel.

2. Activities are under the direction and control of a US military commander.

3. Activities are preceding and related to anticipated hostilities or related to ongoing hostilities involving U.S. military forces.

4. The US role "*in the overall operation* is apparent or to be acknowledged publicly."[115]

Even if Department of Defense (DoD) personnel conducted TCA under the control of a US military commander, the activity is not preceding or related to hostilities involving US military forces, and there is no intention of public acknowledgement of the overall action. Therefore, current legislation shifts TCA under the umbrella of covert action.

The Intelligence Authorization Act defines covert action as "an activity or activities of the United States Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad, where it is intended that the role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly."[116] The definition of covert action encapsulates the essence of TCA. A provision included under Title 50 of US Code retains jurisdiction over all covert action and maintains oversight under the purview of the intelligence oversight committees.[117] According to Executive Order 12333, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is the primary agency permitted to conduct any type of covert action outside of war. Only the President of the United States can deviate if he deems the chance of success lies with another

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[115] Andru E. Wall, "Demystifying the Title 10-Title 50 Debate: Distinguishing Military Operations, Intelligence Activities," *Harvard National Security Journal* 3, no. 1 (September 2011): 133.

[116] Ibid., 127.

[117] Ibid., 126.

agency. [118] It follows, then, that any US sponsored social movement, including TCA, by definition falls under the umbrella of covert action as well.

TCA is a less violent or nonviolent option for policy and diplomacy during times of peace or within the confines of the gray zone. It seeks reform-oriented social movements that target specific national policies or singular actors (political and/or non-political) who are not acting in line with US interests. TCA capitalizes on vulnerabilities within a state and incites reform-oriented social movements through persuading and/or co-opting existing organizations. This is an option that possesses certain parameters that increase the probability of success.

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[118] Ibid., 89. This can also be found in section 1.7, section a, paragraph 4 of Executive Order No. 12333. See Ronald Reagan, Executive Order 12333, "Intelligence Community Elements," *Code of Federal Regulation*, title 50 (1981 comp.).

Testing the Theory of Targeted Collective Action

Analysis in this section provides a broad comparative historical case study of events that occurred during the Arab Spring, beginning in 2010. The Arab Spring offers a cross-section of multiple countries affected by social movements. Each country reacted differently, resulting in a broad spectrum of change, from minimal policy change to all-out civil war that in some cases is still ongoing. This analysis will focus on the characteristics, actors, and processes of each country in order to show where and how TCA would be feasible, and what conditions would not facilitate TCA. Countries eliminated up front highlight instances where TCA is infeasible. Detailed analysis will focus on conditions and events that existed in Oman and Morocco, as these two countries highlight an optimal situation for TCA, and help explain how uprisings can spur moderate change within a state.

Prelude

The Arab Spring refers to a sweeping social movement that occurred in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) resulting in regime changes, political reform, and civil war.[119] The movement began in the streets of Tunisia, in December of 2010. A 26 year-old Tunisian, unable to find employment despite a degree in computer science, received harassment for selling vegetables from a cart without a license. After the police stole his vegetables, he then complained to the magistrate who allegedly slapped him. In frustration, he doused himself with paint thinner and lit himself on fire.[120] Images and videos of this occurring rapidly spread across Tunisia and the rest of North Africa. Public protest broke out calling for the resignation of the President Zine Abidine Ben Ali, who had ruled the country since 1988.[121] By

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[119] Marc Lynch, ed., *The Arab Uprisings Explained: New Contentious Politics In The Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 1-3.

[120] David S. Sorenson, *Revisiting Transitions in the Arab World, Spring or Fall?* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air Force Research Institute, 2012), 6.

[121] Ibid.

mid-January, the Tunisian dictator fled to Saudi Arabia with his family. By 27 February 2011, the regime was completely overthrown.[122]

The movement diffused into Egypt where discontent over the Hosni Mubarak regime spurred cries of "Tunisia is the solution."[123] Eighteen days of sustained protests by hundreds of thousands of Egyptians in Cairo's Tahrir Square forced Mubarak to step down after ruling for nearly thirty years.[124] From Tunisia and Egypt, the movement spread rapidly into Libya and Morocco, as well as into the Middle East, including Oman, Jordan, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, and to some extent Saudi Arabia and Iraq.[125] As described earlier, the movement in each state had varying results that were greatly dependent on the response of the government. Some regimes survived, some were deposed, and some are still fighting for their existence.

The Authoritarian Tradition

This section discusses the roots of autocratic regimes in the MENA region and why authoritarian rule has prevailed. The authoritarian tradition in the Middle East and some portions of North Africa are unique from other regions of the world. According to a RAND study, governmental traditions in the MENA region are due to distinct political cultures, the role of Islam in politics, and the role of oil in the regional economies.[126] The study claims that the distinct culture and the role of Islam in politics created

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[122] Tariq Ramadan, *Islam and the Arab Awakening* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 6.

[123] Sorenson, *Revisiting Transitions in the Arab World, Spring or Fall?*, 6.

[124] David Siddhartha Patel, "Roundabouts and Revolutions: Public Squares, Coordination, and the Diffusion of the Arab Uprisings," 30 January 2015, accessed 21 Aug 2015, http://aalims.org/uploads/Patel.pdf.

[125] Sorenson, *Revisiting Transitions in the Arab World, Spring or Fall?,* 7-8.

[126] Laurel E. Miller et al., *Democratization in the Arab World: Prospects and Lessons from Around the Globe* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2012), 21.

the custom of blind acceptance of political authority by Muslims.[127] Since the ninth century, Muslim scholars argued "believers should not rebel against a leader as long as he proclaims himself a Muslim and can protect society against *fitna* (civil disorder)."[128] For fear of civil war or foreign conquest, Islamic culture historically accepts and advocates a 'quietest' approach to authoritarianism. This narrative is still taught by modern Muslim clerics, most of which work for or protect the interests of the authoritarian regime.[129]

A counter argument to the cultural justifications of authoritarian rule is the presence of oil and direct government revenue streams. Arab countries have sixty percent of the world's known oil reserves and are responsible for forty percent of internationally traded crude oil.[130] This affects not only the oil producing countries, but neighboring countries as well. According to the RAND study, this geopolitical phenomena resulted in reinforcing authoritarian rule in three ways. First, oil revenues go directly to the state, thereby providing the regime resources without taxing the population, known as the rentier effect.[131] The population receives state sponsored public goods and services without taxation. Oil revenue allows the regime the opportunity to repress or buy off potential opposition without oversight. Second, oil revenues have allowed the state to create and modernize institutions that directly support the regime.[132] Businesses, workers, and opportunities for the population are mostly under the regime's control. Bribery or direct repression effectively stifles independent organizations presenting opposition. Finally, oil revenue allows the regime to prioritize coercive apparatuses to deter defection and suppress dissent.[133]

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[127] Ibid., 45.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid., 47.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid., 48.

[133] Ibid.

Regardless of reason, culture or oil, the authoritarian tradition significantly impacted the development of MENA regimes and their reaction to events of the Arab Spring.

Characteristics of the State

This section will discuss the variation within MENA regimes that existed prior to the Arab Spring and identify reasons why certain countries are not feasible for TCA. Most of the countries affected by the Arab Spring had a particular type of autocratic government ranging from dictatorial republics to dynastic monarchies.[134] Each government exhibited forms of authoritarian rule over the state. Certain states, eliminated up front in this case study, do not meet the conditions prerequisite for TCA.

Libya, for example, is a country that is not feasible for TCA due to the hostile relations with the United States prior to the Arab Spring and its extremely rigid regime. Friction between the United States and Libya had fluctuated since a military coup d'état led by Muammar Ghaddafi seized power in 1969.[135] Libya historically supported several terrorist acts against western nations since the 1980s, and, as late as 2003, revealed ambitions to develop weapons of mass destruction.[136] Ghaddafi reacted to protesters calling for democracy with extreme violence, which resulted in violent clashes and many civilians killed.[137] With UN support, armed rebels captured Ghaddafi alive and eventually lynched him, bringing the regime to a violent end.[138]

The rigidity of regimes in other countries eliminates the feasibility of TCA as well. Dictatorial regimes emerge from a dominant group that tend to consolidate power and develop a limited support

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[134] Ibid., 40.

[135] "Libya," Country Watch, accessed 21 December 2015, http://www.countrywatch.com.lumen. cgsccarl.com/Intelligence/CountryReviews?CountryId=100.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ramadan, *Islam and the Arab Awakening*, 35.

[138] Ibid., 42.

base.[139] The consolidation of power comes with repressive measures that ensure the resiliency of the regime. These measures, violent at times, decrease the flexibility of the state and also decrease the fitness of the political system. Despite the violent tendency of dictatorial regimes, Arab dictators "had long presented themselves to the world as a necessary evil," that kept the rise of radical Islamism in check.[140] Three other examples of dictatorial regimes that were too rigid from the onset are Syria, Tunisia, and Egypt.

Syria, led by President Bashar al-Assad, is a primary example of a rigid dictatorial regime. Bashar al-Assad came to power in 2000 after the death of his father, Hafez al-Assad.[141] The Assad regime began in 1970 following a bloodless military coup that sought to rectify the fractured Ba'ath party.[142] Hafez al-Assad immediately began consolidating power through Ba'ath party and minority Alawite sect control.[143] Hafez al-Assad began the tradition of violently putting down opposition in the 1970s in responding to an insurgency run by a fundamentalist Sunni Muslim group, the Muslim Brotherhood.[144] Control continued under the minority Shi'ite Alawite sect over a mostly Sunni Muslim state. The Bashar al-Assad response to protests during the Arab Spring exemplified that the violent tradition of putting down opposition had passed down from father to son. As of the writing of this monograph, the country remains in civil war, with assassinations, alleged massacres, suspicions of chemical weapons use, and a new emergent threat known as the Islamic State.[145] The entrenched al-Assad regime was ultimately too rigid and violent for TCA-style activities to have worked in Syria.

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[139] Miller et al., *Democratization in the Arab World*, 51.

[140] Ramadan, *Islam and the Arab Awakening*, 13.

[141] Miller et al., *Democratization in the Arab World*, 43.

[142] "Syria," US Department of State, accessed 21 December 2015, http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/syria/85051.htm.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.

[145] "Syria," Country Watch, accessed 21 December 2015, http://www.countrywatch.com.lumen.

Tunisia, led by President Zine Abidine Ben Ali, presented a rigid dictatorial regime similar to Syria, with the exception of tensions with the United States. Ben Ali consolidated power, dependent on strong party system. Ben Ali created a security apparatus loyal to his party separate from the military. This somewhat marginalized the professional military, a common practice for dictators in response to fears of military coups.[146] The military remained neutral as the population rose against Ben Ali, which eventually led to his rapid abdication and departure.[147] Ben Ali's limited power-base was too rigid and lacked avenues to adjust to the increasing pressures of the anti-regime uprisings.

Egypt experienced a similar fate with Hosni Mubarak's rigid dictatorship. The key difference is that Mubarak maintained a liberalized autocracy which tolerated, and at times promoted, "a level of state-managed pluralism."[148] This system encouraged negotiation, or cooption with the regime. This allowed the military, remnants of the old regime, to mediate and ultimately sacrifice one man for the sake of asserting its authority and eventually establishing a new regime.[149] Additionally, external factors prevented further escalation of the situation in Egypt.[150] The Egyptian system could have allotted some opportunity for TCA, but Hosni Mubarak's rigid regime, coupled with his propensity for violent reaction to direct threats of his rule, arguably presented too high of a risk for TCA.

In Syria, TCA was not feasible due to how entrenched the al-Assad regime was. In both the Tunisian and Egyptian cases, the military adopted the role of defenders of the state and opted for removing an unpopular autocrat to prevent state collapse. This construct lends itself to TCA, but the risk

cgsccarl.com/Intelligence/CountryReviews?CountryId=167.

[146] Daniel Brumberg, "Theories of Transition," in Lynch, 50.

[147] Ramadan, *Islam and the Arab Awakening*, 26.

[148] Brumberg, "Theories of Transition," 48.

[149] Ibid., 49-50.

[150] Ramadan, *Islam and the Arab Awakening*, 26-29.

of state collapse as a result of mass uprisings to counter a rigid regime is very high, if measured according to the fitness of the political system.

Rigid, strongly autocratic states are not the only states unsuitable for TCA. According to the criteria necessary for TCA to work, the weak nature of Yemen and Iraq eliminates both of these states. These two states had too many vulnerabilities prior to events of the Arab Spring, which would eventually lead to their collapse. TCA seeks minimal to moderate reform, not overthrow. Pressure from the populace resulted in almost immediate civil conflict in Yemen and the overthrow of Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.[151] Iraq experienced minimal protest, but its government was so weak that it lost significant portions of its territory to the emerging threat of the Islamic State along the Syrian border to the north.[152] The fitness of the regime in power directly correlates to the state's ability to survive dissent, this was not the case in either Yemen or Iraq.

The remaining countries affected by the Arab Spring had a distinctive relationship between the governing and the governed. This section will discuss the dynamics within regimes that were neither too rigid nor too weak, and identify reasons why certain countries were not feasible for TCA, and why some were. This monograph argues that the socio-political dynamic of each country contributed to opposition groups that arose during the Arab Spring. Some dynamics were conducive to TCA, while others were not.

Interestingly, dynastic monarchies fared better with social uprisings than dictatorial regimes (with Bahrain as the exception). A royal family as opposed to a single monarch rules dynastic monarchies.[153] Shared power within the regime leaves the monarch accountable to family members as many hold positions within the government.[154] The need for wide-spread consensus among the elite in decision-

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[151] Lynch, *The Arab Uprisings Explained*, 7.

[152] Syria," Country Watch, accessed 21 December 2015, http://www.countrywatch.com.lumen. cgsccarl.com/Intelligence/CountryReviews?CountryId=167.

[153] Miller et al., *Democratization in the Arab World*, 50.

[154] Ibid.

making allows for a more flexible political system as opposed to dictatorial or absolute monarchical regimes wherein power is concentrated in one individual.

Both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain posed viable candidates for TCA according to the flexibility and fitness of their relative political systems. However, TCA was not feasible, based on assessments of the organizations that eventually opposed the regimes. As discussed earlier, organizations must: (1) operate within the government's acceptable level of dissent, and (2) have interests that are somewhat in-line with the US, for the purpose of enacting minor to moderate change. In Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, opposition groups predominantly arose along the Shia-Sunni sectarian divide. Polarization existed based on the sect of Islam.[155] The perception of Iranian influence over Shiite populations in both countries meant that there would be no acceptance of opposition from any Shiite affiliated group.[156] Repression of the opposition was rapid and, at times, violent.

The regime of Saudi Arabia pre-empted protests and spent nearly $200 billion in spending packages for pay raises, higher unemployment benefits, and new housing as early as February of 2011.[157] These spending packages primarily targeted the dominant Sunni population's grievances. Remaining opposition groups arose from the small Shia minority in the oil-producing Eastern Province.[158] These groups did not have the luxury of any type of popular support leaving the groups ripe for radicalization. They posed no risk and had no wide social footing with which to enact change. Additionally, they did not operate under the government's comfort level of dissent due to their Iranian-Shia connection. Had the Saudi regime not pre-empted protests and marginalized Sunni popular support for anti-government protest, Saudi Arabia would have been a candidate for TCA.

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[155] Ramadan, *Islam and the Arab Awakening*, 63.

[156] Ibid., 63-66.

[157] Lynch, *Arab Uprising Explained*, 70.

[158] Jason Benham, "Hundreds of Saudi Shi'ites Protest in East," Reuters Canada, 25 March 2011, accessed 11 January 2016, http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCATRE72O3RL20110325?sp=true.

Bahrain experienced a great deal more turmoil than other monarchies in the MENA region. Bahrain's population is approximately seventy percent Shia ruled by a Sunni monarch.[159] King Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa labeled protests in Bahrain as radical Shiites attempting to overthrow the regime.[160] The King immediately declared a state of emergency and asked for assistance from other Arab Gulf States that make up the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).[161] The GCC responded with an approximately four-thousand five-hundred man Saudi and United Arab Emirates (UAE) force to quell the uprising.[162]

These examples show that TCA support to opposition groups is not feasible when that opposition derives from minority dissidents connected to a powerful state which is adversarial to the targeted state. In Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, the predominantly Shia opposition groups were labeled as proxies of Iran. The perception of Iranian influence over Shiite populations meant that these states allowed no acceptance of opposition from any Shiite affiliated group, limiting the effectiveness of organizations that otherwise would have been available to execute TCA.

The Balanced State

As described above, certain states affected by the Arab Spring did not pose as viable candidates for TCA due to the nature of their political systems, and the socio-political relationship between the population and those in power. This section discusses the conditions existing in Morocco and Oman prior to the Arab Spring that made them viable options for TCA. Both of these states have characteristics and dynamics which made them more feasible than the regimes described above.

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[159] "Bahrain," Country Watch, accessed 21 December 2015, http://www.countrywatch.com. lumen.cgsccarl.com/Intelligence/CountryReviews?CountryId=13.

[160] Ramadan, *Islam and the Arab Awakening*, 40.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Ismaeel Naar, "Timeline: Arab Spring," Al Jazeera, last modified 17 December 2013, accessed 19 December 2015, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2013/12/timeline-arab-spring-20131217114018534352.html.

Morocco is under a monarchy ruled by Mohammed VI, son of Hassan II.[163] Since assuming the throne in 1999, he has focused his efforts on economic expansion and the reduction of poverty within the state.[164] King Mohammed VI's regime exhibited progressive flexibility for change within its political system prior to the Arab Spring despite his monopoly on the financial capital of the nation.[165] Unlike other nations in the MENA region, Islamic opposition groups were recognized and accepted under the Moroccan regime.[166] This facilitated a more peaceful process of protest. It created a dynamic within the state where the population possessed a recognized and accepted means with which to express their grievances peacefully.

In assessing the primary oppositional group, the Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD), long-term recognition and acceptance as the opposition created a more moderate stance toward the regime. Recognition and acceptance was only a part of the dynamic; the PJD also had legitimacy in the eyes of the population due to its limited role in previous Moroccan governments. In contrast to opposition groups in other parts of the MENA, the PJD assumed a more restrained approach on how it pursued reform. The PJD did not ask for a regime change, but rather incremental change.[167] This approach did not invite a harsh response from the regime. Additionally, this group gave the people non-violent means to express their desire for moderate change. The PJD provided a platform to the majority of the population that sought change, but oversaw what changes were requested, preventing the infusion of radical ideals.

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[163] Malik Ibrahim, "Morocco and the Arab Spring: A Crisis Averted? – Analysis," Eurasia Review, 13 January 2016, accessed 17 January 2016, http://www.eurasiareview.com/13012016-morocco-and-the-arab-spring-a-crisis-averted-analysis/.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Camille Tawil, "Morocco's Stability in the Wake of the Arab Spring," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, last modified 23 May 2013, accessed 17 January 2016, https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/moroccos-stability-in-the-wake-of-the-arab-spring.

[167] Ibid.

King Mohammed VI responded to protests rapidly, and effectively acquiesced to the population, peacefully quelling the rapid spread of discontent that engulfed other parts of the region. He maintained his legitimacy in the eyes of the population by diverting grievances from himself to an elected parliament.[168] He maintained himself as the "Commander of the Faithful" while encouraging legislative processes to bring about change.[169] The PJD's legitimacy in the eyes of the population reflected in the ballot box, with overwhelming success in parliamentary seats as well as in gaining the appointment of the Prime Minister.[170] More importantly, Morocco's more extreme Islamic groups were unable to garner popular support because of the successes of the more moderate PJD.[171] Overall, moderate change occurred in Morocco as a result of a flexible political system responding to an uprising led by a restrained, recognized opposition group.

Like Morocco, Oman is a monarchy, ruled by Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said.[172] Unlike Morocco, Oman is an oil producing state that facilitates the rentier effect on the population.[173] As described earlier, oil revenues go directly to the state, providing the regime resources without taxing the population; the population receives state-sponsored public goods and services without charge.[174] Since the

[168] Nicolas Pelham, "How Morocco Dodged the Arab Spring," *The New York Review of Books*: NYR Daily, July 5, 2012, accessed 21 December 2015, http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2012/07/05/how-morocco-dodged-arab-spring/.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Ibid.

[171] Tawil, "Morocco's Stability in the Wake of the Arab Spring," https://www.ctc.usma.edu /posts/moroccos-stability-in-the-wake-of-the-arab-spring.

[172] Ahmad Khalid Majidyar, "Is Sectarian Balance in the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Qatar at Risk?," *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research* 6 (October 2013): 1.

[173] James Worall, "Oman: The 'Forgotten' Corner of the Arab Spring," *Middle East Policy Council* 19, no. 1 (Fall 2012): 6, accessed 19 December 2015, http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/oman-forgotten-corner-arab-spring.

[174] Miller et al., *Democratization in the Arab World*, 47.

1970s, Sultan Qaboos' regime has been successful in developing a social contract with the population that

has created a sense of entitlement and a belief that the government could and should solve all of their

problems.[175] However, unlike other MENA rentier states, Oman has created a tradition of inclusion with

all sects of Islam.[176] Seventy-five percent of the Omani population are Ibahdi Muslims. The Ibahdi

Muslim sect evolved from a seventh-century rebellion and maintains a distinction from traditional Shias

and Sunnis.[177] Omani Shiites, despite only making up five percent of the population, are active and

prominent in Omani culture and maintain loyalty to the Sultan. Iran possesses very little influence over

Omani Shiites, a point of contention in other Arab Gulf states.[178] The rentier effect, coupled with a

tradition of inclusion, created a population that is conservative as a whole with moderate tendencies.

These moderate tendencies translated themselves into moderate protests.

Protests in Oman did not call for regime change as in other Arab states.[179] The protests

represented wide swaths of the population with grievances regarding economic and social issues. They

sought minor to moderate change within the state.[180] There was no single opposition group, simply

popular protests by various interest groups; an accepted practice in Oman.[181] The Sultan responded by

addressing a large percentage of grievances with social, economic, and political reforms.[182] Protesters as

whole denounced any violence immediately as outliers from the movement.[183] Overall, moderate change

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[175] Worall, "Oman: The 'Forgotten' Corner of the Arab Spring," 6.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Majidyar, "Is Sectarian Balance in the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Qatar at Risk?," 1.

[178] Ibid., 1-3.

[179] Worall, "Oman: The 'Forgotten' Corner of the Arab Spring," 6.

[180] Ibid., 5.

[181] Ibid., 1.

[182] Ibid., 5.

[183] Ibid., 1.

occurred in Oman due to a flexible monarchy that had a long standing social contract with the population, one that promoted inclusion and integration, and fostered moderate and conservative tendencies.

Ultimately, as the varying results of the countries affected by the Arab Spring show, the characteristics of the state, the organizations within the state, and the dynamics between these two actors, are critical in eliminating and identifying candidates for TCA. The effects and end results of each social movement on the regime and social infrastructure support the assertion that conducting proper assessments according to criteria identified in this monograph's theory of TCA are necessary to increase the probability of success. Conversely, encouraging uprisings within unsuitable candidates, whether it is due to the state, organizations, or political dynamics between the two, has the potential for catastrophe.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to identify conditions required for successful social movements and uprisings that allow the USG, as an external actor, to set conditions and influence a population towards conducting an uprising in support of USG political goals. This monograph sought to determine the potential for the USG to exercise the option of a social movement to achieve limited objectives in countries not in line with US interests. It sought to show that, by exploiting existing vulnerabilities within the state, the United States could leverage organizations to rise against the targeted policy or individual and enact moderate change for the sake of US interests. Furthermore, this monograph provided a theoretical outline for assessing the feasibility of sponsoring a social movement and a process to carry out such an activity to achieve reform, called TCA.

TCA provides a less violent or nonviolent alternative to UW, one that seeks to provoke reform-oriented social movements by specifically targeting indigenous policies or singular actors not in-line with US interests. It pursues reform by persuading an existing organization to take action against the targeted policy or person. The necessary antecedent to execution of TCA is that of assessing the suitability of the target state or individual, the organization, and the political dynamics between the two. It sought to take the vulnerability identified, fundamentally connect it to the target, and tailor a narrative in a way that enflames the organization(s) chosen through diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. Social movements that occurred in multiple countries with varying results during the Arab Spring provided a wide cross-section for testing the accuracy of TCA.

Certain issues arose during analysis. Despite the multitude of countries affected by social movements, the Arab Spring seemed to be a regionally and ethnically isolated case study with nuances specific to that region. Specific nuances that influenced findings included the authoritarian tradition prevalent in the Middle East, the Sunni-Shia divide, and the effects of oil revenue on the socio-political relationship.

The tradition of authoritarian rule in the Middle East shaped the social contracts developed in each state. Dictatorial regimes typically were more rigid than and not as flexible to change as monarchical regimes. This phenomena does not prove that all dictatorial regimes are too rigid for TCA, but it seems an accurate assertion in the states affected by the Arab Spring. It is imperative to take a closer look through the framework presented above at the characteristics of the state, the government, and the political system to determine tendencies and confirm suitability for TCA.

The Sunni-Shia divide played a significant role in religion, politics, and the social infrastructure of the MENA region.[184] This phenomena poses a major challenge to most MENA states that do not enjoy a homogenous Shia or Sunni population. The Sunni-Shia divide played a major role in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia where opposition groups predominantly arose along the Shia-Sunni sectarian divide.[185] The perception of Iranian influence over Shiite populations in both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain left no acceptance of opposition from any Shiite-affiliated group.[186] The Sunni-Shia divide effectively limited viable organizations for TCA when opposition against the government arose from this sectarian rift.

Finally, the effects of oil exploitation and the direct government revenue streams on the socio-political relationship further distinguishes the MENA region from the rest of the world. Oil revenues created a geopolitical phenomenon that affected the region in three distinct ways. First, oil revenues going directly to the state provided the regime resources without taxing the population, the rentier effect.[187] Second, revenue allowed the state to create and modernize institutions that directly supported the regime,

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[184] Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2008), 22. The split between these two groups is attributed to the different interpretations of who the rightful successor to the prophet Mohammed as caliph, or leader of the Islamic world, after his death in 632. Of the one billion Muslims globally, 90 percent identify themselves as Sunni. The remainder are made of mostly Shia with the bulk residing in Iran.

[185] Ramadan, *Islam and the Arab Awakening*, 63.

[186] Ibid., 63-66.

[187] Miller et al., *Democratization in the Arab World,* 47.

placing most of the population under the regime's control.[188] Finally, it allowed regimes the luxury of prioritizing mechanisms for coercion to deter defection and suppress dissent.[189] Oil revenues allowed regimes the opportunity to repress or bribe potential opposition without oversight, such as in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and other Arab Gulf States that make up the GCC.[190] Bribery or direct repression effectively stifled independent organizations, presenting limitations on options for utilizing TCA.

Despite these regional nuances, the Arab Spring provided variable outcomes for assessing the status and potential of states and organizations to foment TCA. By utilizing this framework, certain aspects of the state came to light. The flexibility and fitness of the state proved central to distinguishing between viable states and those that would not be able to respond as desired to social movements seeking minor to moderate reform.

Furthermore, the regionally specific factors that limited how many organizations or groups were susceptible to TCA. However, this did not change the necessity to confirm the ability for the group to pose opposition overtly in the political system. Groups and organizations that were active and accepted in the political process prior to social movements leaned more towards moderation and were prone to a less violent expression of dissent. A moderate approach by the protesting groups solidified tolerance by the political system when faced with violent examples of protest in neighboring countries, as seen in Morocco and Oman. This increased the organization's opportunities to express their grievances, and enhanced their legitimacy in the eyes of the populace. Legitimacy from the population's perspective served to temper emotions and provided the people a voice. Overall, this phenomena increased the organization's effectiveness to enact reform through social movements.

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[188] Ibid., 48.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Lynch, *Arab Uprising Explained*, 69-70.

Recommendations

TCA as proposed in this monograph is but one option available for the USG to utilize in asserting US national interests on another state. Despite the limitations of authorities delineated by the *Code of Federal Regulations*, potential exists for social movements to support traditional military activities such as UW. There is a precedence for joint CIA and DoD operations dating back to the 1960s.[191] NPS professor Doowan Lee's research affirmed the utility of applying a social movement approach to UW. Though theoretically feasible, DoD personnel must take special care to prevent the creation of a social movement in support of traditional military activities unless appropriate authorities are designated. Leveraging a naturally occurring social movement could facilitate UW activities, but is not traditionally a part of enabling a resistance movement in the sense of UW. Further research is required to explore the utility of social movements, US sponsored or otherwise, in support of traditional military activities and determine the delineation of authorities.

Additionally, the prevalence of tensions with other nations and the need for reasonable responses outside of a formal state of war make it necessary to have a wide array of options to select from. A joint DoD and CIA effort permits the expansion of options available beyond the DoD's legislative and legal restrictions. Further research on closer integration of DoD and CIA efforts and capabilities is necessary to maximize the potential of projecting power and influence.

Ultimately, TCA provides a theoretical framework for assessing the feasibility of sponsoring a reform-oriented social movement specifically targeting indigenous policies or singular actors not in line with US interests. It affords the United States another option to utilize during times outside of war where action is necessary. With the constantly evolving and persistent threats in the gray zone, it is imperative that the United States has feasible options outside of full-scale or partial military intervention to assert US political goals and defend its interests. TCA offers one potential option for actions in this area.

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[191] Ibid., 113-114.

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